

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO

The Mummy Cover KM 14565:a in the collection of the Finnish Heritage Agency

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract Pro gradu tutkielmiani käsittelee muinasegyptiläistä arkkulautaa KM 14565:a ja siihen liittyvää tutkimusta. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää kenelle kyseinen arkkulauta olisi saattanut kuulua ja kenen hautajaisissa sitä mahdollisesti olisi käytetty. Keräsin tutkimusaineistoa tarkastelemalla arkkulautaa visuaalisesti, perehtymällä arkkulaudan rakennusmenetelmiin sekä dokumentoimalla valokuvauksen avulla kyseistä esinettä. Myöhemmin tulkitsin lisäksi esineen sisältämiä kuvia ikonografista teoriaa hyödyntämällä. Tutkin esineen fyysisesti, tarkastelemalla sitä ulkoisesti paikan päällä säilytyskohteessa Museovirastossa käänsin hieroglyfejä sekä analysoin arkkulaudan kuvia ikonografisen teorian avulla. Syvennyin myös muinasegyptiläisten arkkujen tutkimukseen ja kirjallisuuteen. Lisäksi selvitin arkistokäynneillä minkälaista kirjallista dokumentaatiota ja muuta materiaalia arkkulaudasta oli olemassa. Tutkimusaineisto antaa ymmärtää, että kyseessä on arkkulauta arkun kannen sijaan. Tämä on merkittävä ero ja tutkimuslöydös, sillä arkkulautoja käytettiin vain muinaisen Egyptin 21 dynastian aikana. Tutkimuksen myötä selviää myös arkkulaudan mahdollinen alkuperän. Se saattaa olla ja hyvin todennäköisesti onkin peräisin merkittävästä 1800-luvun hautalöydöstä nimeltä Bab el Gasus. Tutkimus paljastaa, että kyseinen arkkulauta on kuulunut naisella, joka on elänyt muinaisen Egyptin kolmannella välikaudella ja joka todennäköisesti kuului Theban Amun papisto yhteisön perheeseen.			
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1 Introduction

Perhaps one of the most iconic images of ancient Egypt is the golden funerary mask of Tutankhamun. These funerary or mummy masks were the basis of which the mummy cover developed. I had first seen the mummy cover (KM 14565:a) during a visit to the archaeological collection of the Finnish Heritage Agency.

It was noticeably fascinating to find an ancient Egyptian object in a Finnish archaeological collection. It was natural to ask, how was it that this artefact ended up in Finland and into the Finnish collection of the Finnish Heritage Agency?



Figure 1: The Mummy Cover KM 14565:a, the head and upper torso..

The purpose of this thesis is simple: to discover to whom this object belonged. By seeking to answer this question I shall also be able to answer other questions that have surfaced during the study such as what is this object and what details can be discovered about the person to whom this belonged.

My aim is to interpret the hieroglyphic texts and to recognize as well as outline some of the meanings conveyed into the picture decoration. By its mere existence this mummy cover is communicating something and my goal is to uncover this message.

In order to decipher the decorations on the mummy cover I shall be utilising the theory of iconography. It was developed by a German art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968). It is an art history theory whose main focus is on the meaning of the subject matter instead of form (Adams 1996: 36). In iconographical research there are three layers of interpretation, all of which happen simultaneously. First the form is identified, for example a circle in an ancient Egyptian coffin decoration. Secondly this form is defined as an image. For example the circle is identified as the sun. On the third level, the symbolic meaning of the sun is interpreted. In the case of ancient Egyptians, the sun was associated with many different gods each with their own particular characteristics.

As a goal in this study I am doing research on the archives of the Finnish Heritage Agency, this will be cursory due to the scope of this study. I shall examine the mummy cover visually and document it by photography. Then, I will compare the pictorial material to the corpus of material I have gathered and analyse the coffin in order to form some kind of conclusion of to whom this object belonged or, more precisely, who was buried together with this object.

I will examine the history of ancient Egypt coffin research and its current research trends. Furthermore, in this part I shall investigate provenance of the mummy cover in question and how it came to be that this ancient Egyptian object can be located at modern day Finland. It is also essential to point out that this mummy cover has not been previously studied. Thus, any information I am able to uncover will significantly add to the research corpus.

Then I shall proceed to introduce the theory applied in this thesis, iconography. In other words, I shall discuss briefly the nature of iconography, its position in

Egyptology and how it actually functions. This is followed by short explanation to some basic contextual information on the ancient Egyptian Third Intermediate Period, wooden coffins and their development in addition to religion and afterlife beliefs.

Next, I shall describe the mummy cover, providing some general information, followed by translations to those hieroglyph texts I was able to decipher together with description of the images in the decorations.

On chapter six I shall carry out brief analysis on the mummy cover, the texts and pictures and answer my research question. I shall also tie the results together with the contextual background.

In the following chapters, I shall discuss the results and the conclusions made. I will be summing up the main points of this study and provide openings for future study.

Before proceeding with the study, it is essential to address some key terms.

Walsem (2017: 251), ikram (en löydä) as well Kathlyn Cooney (2014: 272) all state that ancient Egyptians had their own names for coffins and sarcophagus each with their own particular meanings. However, it is important to have terms and definitions that work in the present and keep the research field cohesive. Cooney gives us a layout of such terms for these funerary objects that, as a whole termed *body containers*. She classifies body containers based on the material of which they are made, in addition to using some additional elements. Sarcophagus is made of stone, coffin from wood and cartonnage from linen and plaster, in addition to which sarcophagus might have had one or more coffins inside it and cartonnage covers the body partly or entirely. Mummy boards are made of wood and laid on top of the deceased inside of a coffin. (Cooney 2014: 272.)

There does not seem to be a coherent convention of the term for the mummy board. In general, it seems to be called either the mummy board or the mummy cover. I shall be using the term mummy cover as it depicts more accurately the nature of the object as a means of protection for the mummy as opposed to being merely an object of certain static and neutral nature.

To make matters more confusing, it appears to be a general convention to call the study of the body containers the coffin studies. I will be following this tradition. Thus, when I use the term coffin studies I am referring to all the different body containers from sarcophagus to cartonnage and when I employ the term coffin, I wish to point to the body container made of wood, that is a coffin.

The dating convention for the chronology of ancient Egypt must also be addressed. In the third century BC Egyptian priest Manetho divided the Egyptian chronology linearly into 30 dynasties. In general, this has been the convention and basis for the chronology of ancient Egypt. At some point, 31st dynasty was added and now in modern literature the dynasties are gathered into larger periods based on changes in political structure. There are three major periods of centralized political control: the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom and the New Kingdom. These were intercepted by three Intermediated Periods of decentralized political control and various states. This did not however mean political weakness or cultural decline. (Lloyd 2014: xxvii.) (Appendix 1) There are several different dates for the chronology. The one used in this thesis is the one used by Ian Shaw (2000). In addition to the conventional dynasty list and periods, he bases his chronology dates on three principles: 1) relative dating methods, 2) absolute chronologies and 3) 'radiometric' methods (Shaw 2000: 2).

Due to time constraints and the lack of resources to gain access some of the material, the study carried out in this thesis is rudimentary but it produces new information about this previously unresearched object. It also gives a diverse base for further investigation. It adds to the corpus of research made into 21st dynasty coffins. Also, the connection to the Bab el-Gasus find is actually very timely as it is a current topic in the modern day research field.

2 Previous Research

2.1 Research History and Literature

Until recent years coffin studies has been a minor field within Egyptology, as the source material discovered during this investigation demonstrates. Taylor explains this lack of interest the researchers have held as a consequence of the large interest that the general public has had on ancient Egyptian coffins and their intriguing stories (Taylor 1989: 7). Cooney (2014: 274) on the other hand points out the massive amount of material and specialised work that this particular research requires. This leads to specialization that calls for time and training as well as concentration on one of the time periods of ancient Egypt.

According to Cooney (2017: 274-275) the focus of these coffin studies has mainly been on “visual markers, typology, the meaning of the body containers” and the issue of provenance. Nowadays, the focus has expanded to an interdisciplinary approach as in the Vatican Coffin Project which together with Egyptology includes Diagnostics and Conservation (Amenta, Greco, Santamaria and Weiss 2018: 9). As well as into research such as Cooney’s study of the reuse of the 21st dynasty coffins and what the results tell us about the economic, social and religious situation in ancient Egypt during this time period (Cooney 2014: 111-112). Both of these projects shall be discussed in more detail later.

In the book *Body, Cosmos and Eternity – New Research Trends in the Iconography and Symbolism of Ancient Egyptian Coffins* (2014) edited by Rogério Sousa, Alessia Amenta gives a concise review of recent research into ancient Egyptian coffins.

The earliest coffin publications are from the 18th century, although most of the interest was placed on the mummies as can be attested by most of the 19th century publications on mummies. In these texts the coffin was merely container for the mummy not an intriguing object of investigation in itself. (Niwinski 1988: 21, 29.)

It is difficult to find written sources that would give a whole picture of the research history of ancient Egyptian coffins. Thus far there is an article written by Cooney in the book *A Companion to Ancient Egyptian Art* edited by Melissa K. Hartwig. Even this source does not address the history of coffins much. Mainly the reason to this

might be due the published literature material about coffins and body containers. This literal material consists mainly of short chapters in multipurpose works, typological studies or publications of studies concentrating on individual coffins.

Coffin research helps us to understand the ancient Egyptian history and culture. It gives us information about economy, society, political history, beliefs and religion (Cooney 2014: 277). Furthermore coffins can be seen as art (Terrace 1968 according to Cooney 2014: 277). Niwinski states that the decorations on 21st dynasty coffins are a natural succession to the 20th dynasty tomb paintings (Niwinski 1988: 18). An individual coffin can tell us about the individual person and his or her family (Wilfong 2013: 5) as well as of his or her social status (Cooney 2014: 277) along with larger historical contexts. In addition, coffin research helps us to discover the materials and techniques used in their making (Taylor 1989: 7).

Next I shall discuss the research carried out specifically on the 21st dynasty coffins.

2.2 Research on 21st Dynasty Coffins

The subject of this study, the mummy cover, has been dated to the 21st dynasty (Toivari-Viitala 2009: 40). Thus, it is essential to discuss the research history of 21st dynasty coffins to a certain extent. In addition, this time period is one to which a major amount of researched coffins have been dated. Cooney (2017: 102) estimates that there are approximately 900 coffins dated to this period.

One of the most important sources for the study of the 21st dynasty coffins is Andrzej Niwinski's book *21st Dynasty Coffins from Thebes – Chronological and Typological Studies* published in 1988. This extensive study is one of the most often referenced. The purpose of Niwinski's study was to create a typology for the Theban yellow type coffins used in the 21st dynasty since "no systematic classification of the coffins" had yet been done (Niwinski 1988: 1, 7). His research consisted of 450 coffins demonstrating typical coffin features of this time period. The material was collected between 1973 and 1984. Rene van Walsem (1993: 10, 47) has criticized Niwinski's work. He sees this publication as the beginning for the understanding of the coffins of 21st dynasty in their social and cultural context, yet he also points out the major

and minor complications. An example of the former being Niwinski's attempt to do too many things at the same time and placing his main concern on typology.

Other important research and publications are Walsem's own study - *The Coffin of Djedmonthuiufankh in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden* (1997) which is his doctoral dissertation concentrating on the technical and iconographical aspects of the afore mentioned coffin. The second is the Bristol Mummy Project in which the scientists unwrapped the mummy of Horemkenesi. The multidisciplinary research, titled *Horemkenesi – May He Live Forever! The Bristol Mummy Project*, was published 2002 and it includes a section of the mummy's coffin.

Two other, previously mentioned, ongoing studies into 21st dynasty coffins are Kathlyn Cooney's study of the reuse of 21st dynasty coffins and the other is the Vatican Coffin Project.

The Vatican Coffin Project began in 2008 when the Egyptian Department of the Vatican Museums decided to collaborate with the Diagnostic Laboratory for Conservation and Restoration of the Vatican Museums. The project has come to include the following partners as of 2018: Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, Musée du Louvre in Paris, Museo Egizi in Turin, Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF) in Paris, Centro Conservazione e Restauro La Venaria Reale in Turin, Xylodata in Paris and Kathlyn M. Cooney (UCLA University, Los Angeles) who is collaborating in the project for the study of the reuse of coffins of Dynasty 21st. (Museivaticani 2018.)

The project, in this preliminary phase, is focused on the 21st dynasty coffins. The aim is to build a database and study the construction and painting techniques as well as finding clues in order to identify ancient coffin workshops. There are plans for the project to span out into other time periods in later studies. (Museivaticani 2018.)

The approach to this subject matter is interdisciplinary including Egyptology, Diagnostics and Conservation. So far the project has organised a conference, held in 2013, and has published a book of the proceedings in 2017. Also as part of the project, Leiden held an exhibition called *The Coffins of the Priest of Amun* in 2013. (Museivaticani 2018.) Leiden has also published their research into the coffins of the priests of Amun in the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities. The book is called

The Coffins of the Priests of Amun – Egyptians coffins from the 21st Dynasty in the collection of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden and it was published in 2018. Many of the recent publications are focused on the coffin find of the Bab el-Gasus cache. As Amenta (2014: 486) points out “they represent a coherent corpus for dating, provenance and commissioning”.

Kathlyn Cooney’s project on the reuse of the 21st dynasty coffins began in 2008. The projects goal is to investigate the reuse of 21st dynasty coffins. Cooney has visited museums and institutions in Europe, the United States and Egypt and has examined about 300 coffins in person by visual examination and photography. Furthermore, she plans to build a database of her research. Which has revealed to date a reuse rate of 53, 82 %. This has an impact on the dating of the 21st dynasty coffins and to our understanding of the social, economic and religious atmosphere in the third intermediate period. (Cooney 2017: 102, karacooney.squarespace.com 2018.)

Next I shall be discussing the research history and the provenance of the mummy cover KM 14565:a which is the subject of this thesis.

2.3 The Mummy Cover KM 14565:a

The catalogue of the Finnish Heritage Agency (Catalogue entry 14565) defines the mummy cover KM 14565:a as a lid for coffin or for a sarcophagus. According to the catalogue, the mummy cover was part of a donation that the Russian emperor received from the Khedive of Egypt. Ministry of National Education of the Russian Empire ordered the University of Odessa to decide how to divide the donation. Finland (part of Russia until becoming independent in 1917) received the mummy cover and nine small statuettes. According to the catalogue they were found in the vicinity of old Thebes. (The Finnish Heritage Agency catalogue entry KM 14565.)

The Finnish Heritage Agency’s catalogue entry includes a segment from the transcript (SMY pöytäkirja 3/X. 1895) of the Finnish Antiquarian Society’s (that was founded 1870 and is still working) meeting that was held in 1895. According to the original transcript written in 3rd October 1895 one of the proceedings that took place in the meeting was the presentation of the coffin lid and the statuettes for the

observation of the members of the society. The transcript has a short description of the coffin lid and the statuettes. This description was included into the Finnish Heritage Agency's catalogue. This documentation can be seen as the first and only study carried out on the mummy cover to date. The description reads as follows:

“The cover, which is made of wood, has the size of a man and a humanlike shape with arms crossed over the chest, wearing a headdress that has two long lappets flowing down to the chest on each side of the face. The whole surface is full of painted figures: here one can see the sacred ibis bird, sacred beetles, priests and so forth, as well as 9 rows of hieroglyphic writing. The statuettes are no more than 20 centimeters high, 6 blue glazed ones, 2 white unglazed ones. These are mummylike as well, with arms crossed over the chest. The Egyptians have placed writing on both the front and the back side of the statuettes with phrases from the sixth chapter of the Book of the Dead.” (SMY pöytäkirja 3/X. 1895) (Translation from Finnish by Sari Kaakinen)

The catalogue does not give a dating to the mummy cover or to the small statuettes. However, the mummy cover has been part of two exhibitions of which publication entries give some further information.

The first exhibition, *Ancient Egypt – a Moment of Eternity*, was held between 30.8. 1993 and 2.1. 1994. In the exhibition material the mummy cover was defined as a mummy cover of an unknown lady and dated to the New Kingdom and 21st dynasty. (Holthoer, Huhtala & Huttunen 1993: 163.) It should be noted here as a side observation, that the catalogue number given here is erroneous.

The second exhibition was *The 40th Anniversary Exhibition of the Finnish Egyptological society –Egypt!*, held between 15.5 and 13.9. 2009. The mummy cover was now defined as a mummy cover of a coffin and dated to the 21st dynasty 1069-945 BC, and to the Theban area. This entry also mentions that this was part of the donation the Egyptian Khedive gave to the Russian government/empire of which ten items were donated to the history museum of Helsinki in 1895. (Toivari-Viitala 2009: 40.) Once again the exhibition catalogue provides a mistaken catalogue number.

The gift also included nine statuettes or *shabti*'s. These cannot be connected to the mummy cover in archaeological context. The only connection these objects have, is that they were part of the same donation and arrived to Finland at the same time. In

the catalogue of the Finish Heritage Agency they are mentioned along with the mummy cover. The exhibition catalogue for *The 40th Anniversary Exhibition of the Finnish Egyptological Society –Egypt!* (Toivari-Viitala 2009: 40) gives a bit more information about the statuettes. Three of the *shabti* statues were part of the exhibition. Km 14565: b is made of blue glazed faience and is 12,2 cm high and 3,9 cm wide. According to the heading it belonged to a priest of Amon named Uia. The *shabti* KM 14565:c is also made of blue glazed faience. It is 9,5 cm high and 3,45 cm wide. This *shabti* has been identified only belonging to a priest of Amon. The last one KM 14565:h is made of fired clay that has a white surface and black coloured painted details. It is 11,2 cm high and 3,45 cm wide. This is a *shabti* statue of Ankhefenkhonsu and there is a mention of Deir el-Bahari with a question mark as the place of origin, opening the possibility that this object might be from the Theban area.

Concerning the provenance of the mummy cover, there are several indications that can lead us to believe that it is extremely likely that these ten artefacts, donated as a diplomatic gift to the Russian emperor, are part of the Bab el-Gasus find. I shall examine these indications next in the following segment.

In the 1800's two major ancient Egyptian 21st dynasty coffin finds were made at Deir el-Bahari. The first one was the so called 'royal cache' and the other, the second find, the Bab el-Gasus cache. (lähde?). The royal cache was found 1881 and still contained the royal mummies and funerary assemblages of about 40 individuals after it had been blundered for five years before its discovery (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996: 194-195). This find included some of the most well known kings like Ramesses II and Tuthmosis III (Niwinski 1988: 24, Reeves & Wilkinson 1996: 196). Among the coffins of this find there were also 14 yellow- type coffins related to the priests of Amun in Thebes in the 21st dynasty (Niwinski 1988: 25).

The Bab el-Gasus cache was found at Deir el-Bahari in 1891 by Mohammed Ahmed Abd el-Rassul. It was then excavated by Eugène Grébault, the head of the Egyptian Antiquities Service and Urbain Bouriant, the director of the *Institute Française d'Archaeologie Oriental* with the help of Egyptologist Georges Daressy (Sousa 2018: 21-22, 27).

The tomb was remarkable in the fact that since its sealing it had stayed untouched (Sousa 2018: 21). It included 153 coffin sets of which 101 were double sets and together with other objects found it had overall about 600 objects, all belonging to the Theban priests of Amun and their families (Sousa 2018: 28-29).

The archaeological documentation was done better than in the case of the royal cache (Niwinski 1988 25), yet still not reaching the now common standards. Daressy made a scheme of the coffins in situ and numbered the coffins, starting from the entrance of the tomb, creating the a-numbers list (Niwinski 1988: 25-26). The coffins were numbered again on the surface now with inclusion of other objects from the tomb, thus creating the b-numbers list (Niwinski 1988: 26, Sousa 2018: 27). To make matters even more confusing the objects were numbered again when they arrived to the Giza museum, resulting in the JE- numbers (Sousa 2018: 28).

In 1892 the Khedive Abbas II Hilmy donated objects from the Bab el-Gasus find to 17 countries. According to Sousa (2018: 32): “ a selection of the *Bab el-Gasus* coffins was retained for the Giza museum and the rest of the objects were divided into groups each containing 4 or 5 coffins, nearly 90 *shabtis* and one or two *shabti*-boxes”. These groups were then appointed their next owner between the diplomats by a drawing of lots. The Bab el-Gasus find was now dispersed around the museums of Europe and United States and mostly forgotten. In recent years there has been a new interest and understanding of the significance of the find with new research and publications being produced (see for example the Vatican Coffin Project conference publication of 2017).

Based on the following facts it can be assumed that the mummy cover and the nine *shabti* statues are from the Bab el-Gasus find. Firstly, in several sources (catalogue, transcript) it is mentioned that these objects under the Finnish Heritage Agency catalogues number KM 14565, are from a gift given by the Egyptian Khedive to the Russian Empire. As previously explained the Bab el-Gasus find was divided to lots of which one was donated to Russia. The second fact is the timing. The Bab el-Gasus find was made in 1891 and the donations took place in 1893/94. I was not able to find the exact date when the mummy cover and *shabti* statues had arrived to Finland but by the time of the meeting of the Finnish Antiquarian Society in 3rd of October 1895 the donated artefacts had arrived. Thus, these indicate that there is a high

possibility of the mummy cover and the statuettes originating from the Bab el-Gasus find.

And finally the *shabti* statues. Mainly the three previously mentioned ones. One of them KM 14565:h is linked by the name Ankhefenkhonsu, to Deir el-Bahari (where Bab el-Gasus is located) and another one, KM 14565:c, by the dedication of priest of Amun. (Toivari-Viitala 2009: 40.) The link to the first one is supported by David Aston.

In his book, *Burial Assemblages of Dynasty 21-25 – Chronology – Typology – Developments* (2009), Aston (2009: 19) examines tomb groups of the Third Intermediate Period. His interest lies in more accurate dating with also three main aims: “(1) to provide a corpus of all published third intermediate period tomb groups” and “(2) to produce typologies for individual grave goods with a view to assessing their value as a means of dating tomb groups in which they are found” and finally “(3) to discover developments, if any, in tomb groups during the period here under review” (Aston 2009: 19). As part of his study Aston has traced objects belonging to each tomb group as accurately as possible. For the location of Deir el-Bahari he has investigated the second cache or according to him the “antiquities service excavation 1891” (Aston 2009: 164). Tomb group TG 781 (A.108) belonged to “god’s father of Amun, overseer of secrets, Ankhefenkhonsu” includes several kinds of different objects including painted pottery *shabtis* of which one is located to Finland (Aston 2009: 183).

Based on these above mentioned clues it can be hypothesized that it is highly presumable that the mummy cover KM 14565:a, in the Finnish Heritage Agency’s archaeological collection, is part of the Bab el-Gasus find. To be entirely sure, this issue needs more investigation which is unfortunately not in the purview of this study.

3 Theory of Iconography

Iconography is an art history theory used in art history. It was developed by a German art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968). During his life Panofsky published several versions of his theory but for the scope of this thesis, it is not needed to go through all the published versions, since the basis of it remains constant. In the context of this study, what is needed is an understanding of what the theory is, how it works and the way in which it can be implemented. The source used for this breakdown of theory is the first publication of Panofsky's theory of iconography from 1939.

According to Panofsky (1939: 3) iconography is a "branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form". This is expressed in a simpler manner by Laurie Schneider Adams (1996: 36) who places iconography's main focus on the meaning of the subject matter instead of form).

It is easier to think iconography in terms of action. Panofsky defines this as act of interpretation which is divided into three levels: pre-iconographical description, iconographical analysis and iconographical interpretation (Panofsky 1939: 14). He also points out that, despite this distinction into these three individual levels of action, these interpretations happen all at the same time (Panofsky 1939: 16, 17).

To find the subject matter or meaning in a work of art we interpret what we see. The subject matter or meaning also has three levels. These are 1) primary or natural subject matter, 2) secondary or conventional subject matter and 3) intrinsic meaning or content. (Panofsky 1939: 5-7.)

Interpretation starts with the pre-iconographical description. On this level, we are looking for the primary or natural subject matter that is found "by identifying pure forms" depicting "natural objects" such as everyday subjects and objects.* Panofsky discusses artistic motifs, meaning forms that have primary or natural meaning. (Panofsky 1939: 5.) Next, follows the iconographical analysis where one finds the secondary or conventional subject matter in a work of art. This demands the recognition of connections of themes and concepts in artistic motifs. When this is reached, these motifs can be seen as images, stories and allegories. (Panofsky 1939:

6.) Finally the iconographical interpretation is made on this level. One is looking for the intrinsic meaning or content. This means the symbolical values that the work of art has. (Panofsky 1939: 14.)

Basically this means that when we are implementing the theory, we are first identifying a form e.g. a female, then we are identifying that form as the goddess Isis and finally we are looking for the symbolism connected/associated with Isis.

Based on my reflections on the literature for the ancient Egyptian coffin studies, iconography appears to be the conventional and most often used theory in the interpretation of the pictures depicted on the coffins. Furthermore, it appears highly adaptable due to the formal and symbolic nature of ancient Egyptian art.

This description of the iconographical principles forms the basis for the analysis of the decorations I shall address in chapter six. The following chapter is reserved for laying the foundations for the contextual background of the mummy cover.

4 Contextual background

4.1 The Third Intermediated Period

The Third Intermediate period (1069-664 BC) lasted from the 21st dynasty to the 25th dynasty. This was a time of political, social and cultural changes. While the time was restless as struggles took place over control of territory and resources it was still mainly stable and should not be regarded as a decline despite its title perhaps suggesting otherwise. (Taylor 2000: 324, Naunton 2014: 120.)

As the power decentralized, Egypt's contact to outside diminished. This led to weakened economy and to changes in social structure and in the ways religion and funerary rites were expressed. (Taylor 2000: 324.) Other factors that influenced the changes was the arrival of settlers from Libya and invaders from Nubia (Taylor 2000: 324, Naunton 2014: 120).

At the beginning of the third intermediate period, in the 21st dynasty, the political control was divided between north and south. North was ruled by the king while the south, at Thebes, was basically a theocracy where the ultimate power was held by the

god Amun. The high priest, who was Amuns appointee was also an army commander. (Taylor 2000: 325-326.) The third intermediate period ended with the 26th dynasty and the return to centralized political power.

4.2 The Development of Ancient Egyptian Coffins

The Egyptian coffin development is inseparably tied to ideas about afterlife. This is demonstrated most clearly by the decorations on the coffins but can also be seen in other aspects.

The development of coffins begins from the earliest burials in the early Predynastic period. These were simple pits in the ground with some type of covering, baskets or even large pots. These basic burial methods were followed by the first true coffins of the late Predynastic period. This was accomplished with the development of copper tools and woodworking techniques. The earliest coffins were simple rectangular wooden boxes. (Taylor 1989, 2001; Ikram and Dodson 1998.)

The wood used in the coffins was mainly native wood of which the most popular was the sycamore fig (*ficus sycomorus*), although the most appreciated wood was the Lebanese cedar (*cedrus libani*). However, it was expensive as it needed to be imported. (Taylor 1989, 2001; Ikram and Dodson 1998.)

The next change was the lengthening of the previously rather short coffin. This change came about due to the development of the embalming techniques for mummification. As the embalming practice evolved, it was discovered that working on the body was easier when it was placed lying on its back. This resulted in now elongated rectangular coffins which stayed in use until the anthropoid coffins appeared in the beginning of the 13th dynasty. (Taylor 1989, 2001; Ikram and Dodson 1998.)

Anthropoid coffins are mummiform shaped and they have a case and a lid that are sealed together firmly. While face on the coffin remained a constant, rest of the decoration and the occasional added carved wooden elements evolved through time. Based on these changes it has been possible to create a dating typology for the

ancient Egyptian wooden coffins. These anthropoid coffins remained in use until the Ptolemaic period. (Taylor 1989, 2001; Ikram and Dodson 1998.)

4.3 The 21st Dynasty Coffins

Just as in any other culture, to have a coffin in ones funeral was a matter of finance. For the ancient Egyptians, this consequently naturally means that most of the ancient Egyptian coffins forming our material corpus belonged to the kings and the elite. This factor is highlighted especially in times of economic uncertainty and reduced access to natural sources. 21st dynasty is characterised by the “yellow”-type coffin. These belong mainly to the Theban elite.

When the high priests of Amun came to political power at the beginning of the 21st dynasty it led to changes in funeral ensembles and rituals. Tombs turned into rock caches without any decoration and the previous decorative richness of tombs was moved to the coffins. (Niwinski 1988: 15.)

The yellow coffins marked the peak in the Egyptian coffin development. This was seen for example in the high quality woodwork and decorative painting. (Niwinski 1988: 8.) Furthermore, with regard to the decorations, their form and substance evolved, which is especially seen in iconographical development. Despite the new confines to only religious visual repertoire the iconography in general became more diverse and varied. (Niwinski 1988: 8, 15.)

The yellow type coffins were in use from the 20th dynasty to the early 22nd dynasty with some overlap with the 19th dynasty, thus spanning over a period of 200 years (Niwinski 1988: 8, Ikram and Dodson 1998: 228). These coffins can be defined according to four main decorative features:

- “1) The colours of the exterior decoration: red, light and dark green on yellow background.
- 2) In most coffins a rich multicolour inner decoration of the coffin-case on yellowish or cherry-red background.
- 3) The bright yellowish varnish outside (and sometimes inside as well) of the coffin.

4) The sculpture representation of hands on the lid.” (Niwinski 1988: 7.)

A typical 21st dynasty funerary ensemble as a whole consisted of five parts: the wooden mummy cover, inner wooden coffin and the outer wooden coffin. The mummy cover was a board placed on top of the mummy and the inner and outer coffin had a case and a lid. (Niwinski 1988: 7).

The 21st dynasty coffin was anthropoid shaped and made in two phases. The first phase involved the wood carpentry while the second part painting of the decorations. The wood used in this time was local sycamore fig (*Ficus sycomorus*) instead of the much coveted Lebanese cedar (*Cedrus libani*) (Niwinski 1988: 57.)

The coffin case was made of five parts that were attached together by glueing, pegging and doweling. The lid’s framework was made the same way and it also had five parts. (Niwinski 1988: 57.) The lid however needed some additional wood carving. Separate carved pieces depicting the mask, hands, feet, beard, ears and amulets were glued or pegged on the lid frame. (Niwinski 1988: 59.)

After coffin case, lid and mummy cover were build the second phase of manufacture began: the addition of the decorations. First the surfaces were covered with white gesso followed by a sketch for the final decorative work carried out by using red paint. Finally the red outlined sketch was filled in with colours after which the varnishing was added to finish the work. (Niwinski 1988: 60, 61.)

Coffins made for women and men had some features that point to the gender of the buried individual. Women had flat hands, earrings and breasts, while men had clenched hands, beards and ears (Niwinski 1988: 60).

4.4 The Mummy Cover

Ancient Egyptian mummy masks were in use from the end of the Old Kingdom to the 18th dynasty and were usually made of wood, plaster, cartonnage and in some rare cases from precious metals (Ikram 2003: 105 - 106). The mummy masks are the basis for the mummy cover.

At the end of the 18th dynasty, hands and cartonnage covering for the torso and legs were added to the mummy mask. These then melded together to form the mummy cover. (Ikram 2003: 107.)

The mummy cover was a board made of wood and plastered and painted in the similar way as the coffin lid. It was shaped into the form of the mummy and it was placed on top of the mummy without any attachments to the surrounding coffin. (Ikram 2003: 107 & Niwinski 1988: 60). The way the mummy cover differed in construction of the coffin lid was that it was made of one single wooden board with some additional elements such as hands, whereas the lid was made of several planks of wood. Also the shape section of the mummy cover was different from the coffin lid. Mainly the mummy covers were flat or carved from the inside to a slight curve, a concave. There are also examples of flat bottomed and firmly convex surfaced mummy covers. (Niwinski 1988: 59 - 60.) To clarify the relation of the mummy cover to the other elements in the funerary ensemble, it should be stated here that the mummy was placed inside a coffin with the mummy cover freely resting on top of it before the coffin was sealed with the coffin lid. In addition to this inner coffin, sometimes also an outer coffin was used.

The mummy covers were in use from the 19th dynasty to the early 22nd dynasty, after which they were succeeded by painted cartonnage cases that covered the whole mummy (Ikram 2003: 107).

4.5 Religion and Afterlife Beliefs

The ancient Egyptian religion was polytheistic. It is a complex set of beliefs and differs greatly from the Christian faith. The Egyptian religion “did not have one universal system of religious belief” (Watterson 1984:3). It was based on family life and the local cult, which made it more individual. The Egyptian religion was peaceful. The Egyptians did not try to convert others to their beliefs, instead they were more likely to include the gods of others to their own pantheon. Furthermore, adding to this tolerant and non-aggressive nature of the religion, was the fact that it did not include human or animal sacrifice. The most noticeable aspects of the Egyptian belief system were animism, fetishism, magic and the belief that “certain

animals possessed divine powers” (Watterson 1984:3-4.) For example the scarab beetle was “the dawn manifestation of the son god” (Pinch 2002: 152) and thus symbolised rebirth, a common theme used in the decorations of coffins.

The ancient Egyptian beliefs in the afterlife are as complex as the religion itself. The basic beliefs were generated at beginning of Egypt’s history and they continued to develop through the existence of the ancient Egyptian state (Ikram 2003: 23). The Egyptians were driven to guarantee the continuation of life in the afterlife and one part of this was to ensure that the body would continue existing on the physical plane, on earth (Ikram & Dodson 1998: 15).

Ancient Egyptians considered “an individual human life as a series of changes, beginning at birth and passing via adolescence and maturity to old age and death”. Death was also a change “leading forward to another type of existence”. (Taylor 2001: 12.)

The physical body was important because it held the heart which was the place for “the soul, spirit, personality and very essence of an individual”. It was also believed that together with the physical body “a person was made up of different component parts that, when taken together, constituted an entire individual: *ren*, the name; *shuyet*, the shadow; *ka*, the double or life-force; *ba*, the personality and soul; *akh*, the spirit”. (Ikram 2003: 24.)

For Egyptians it was important to make sure that all these elements of an individual survived (Ikram 2003: 24). One aspect of this aspiration for preservice was the coffin which was connected the deceased to the god Osiris. Osiris was the ruler of the underworld and large part of the funerary beliefs relate to the myth of Osiris (Ikram 2003: 33, 35). As Cooney (2017: 110) states: “A coffin was essentially meant to make a functional link between the thing and the person – to transform the dead into eternal Osirian and solar version of him or herself. The coffin was believed to ritually activate the dead.

5 The Mummy Cover KM 14565: a

The mummy cover (The Finnish Heritage Agency catalogue number KM 14565:a) examined in this thesis is made of wood. Based on my observations the upper side of the wooden surface is covered with white gesso which has then been painted over with polychrome decorations. Lastly the mummy cover has been covered with yellow varnish. The underside has most probably been left untouched.

The cover is made of one single wooden board with additional attachments in the form of the head and hands attached with wooden pegs. A construction feature that distinguishes it from how the coffin lids were made. The wood used in this mummy cover is unidentified.

The mummy cover is anthropoid shaped and its length is 168 cm, the widest part is 38 cm and at its thickest (measured from the nose) it is 7 cm.

The decorations are sketched with red paint that has been drawn over or filled with colour. The colours used are red, light green and a dark colour that could be dark green or blue or faded black.

Based on my visual examination the mummy cover has suffered some damage. There are cracks on the painted surface and in some places the colourful painting is absent. Some parts from the edges of the mummy cover and the right hand are missing. According to the condition report by The Finnish Heritage Agency, the state of the mummy cover is moderate. The report states further that it has suffered some damage from wood pets. (The Finnish Heritage Agency 2009.)

According to the typology created by Niwinski the mummy cover is Type II-d and can be dated to the 21st dynasty.

To better follow the explanations of the decorations, it should be pointed out that the directions are from the point of view of the mummy, which means that the right side of the mummy cover corresponds to the left hand side of the reader. Furthermore, for reasons of clarity the detailed references have been excluded. The list for the source literature is gathered together in the biography.

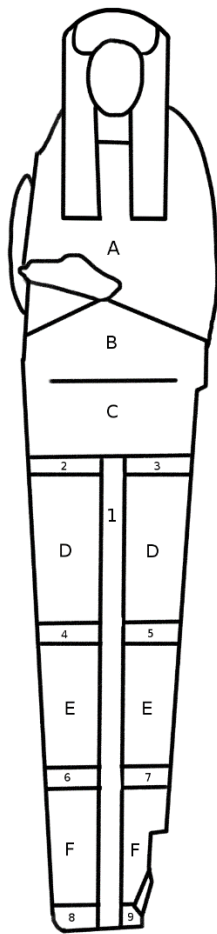


Figure 2: A diagram of the registers on the mummy cover.

5.1 Descriptions of the Decorations

5.1.1 The Upper Part of the Mummy Cover



Figure 3: Register A..

The upper part of the mummy cover is comprised of the head, the upper torso and the hands. The head and the round part of the head dress are made of a separate piece of wood which are attached, with two wooden pegs, into the baseboard that is made of one piece of wood.

The wig is carved from the baseboard with slight rounded bulges in the place of the earrings, which are decorated with rosettes. In addition to the head and the head dress the flat hands are also made of a separate piece of wood. The right hand, designed to be resting on the left side, is missing, only the peg attaching it to the baseboard is present. The left hand, resting on the right side, is in its place stationary, however, it is no longer attached to the baseboard.

The top of the head gear is decorated with a lotus flower, probably on some kind of headband as far as can be detected due to most of the paint having chipped away from the area. The face has suffered some damage, it is covered with several cracks and the sides of the face, the lips and the jaw are missing paint. The right shoulder is

missing some pieces and the upper arm part has been reattached leaving the break line clearly visible.

The mummy cover has the *wsj* collar. The collar reaches from forearms to shoulders. On the left shoulder it ends with a clip depicted by a picture of a head of a falcon. The shoulder also has a lotus flower motif. The right shoulder is missing, yet based on the few lines of black paint still visible, it can be assumed that the decoration on this right side has been identical to the left side.

The forearms are painted with decorative bands, with two *wedjat* eyes on either side, while lotus flowers indicate the place of the elbows. On the left hand, that is still left intact, there are three dots of coloured paint possibly indicating rings.

Between the wig ends and the arms there is a decoration (A). It depicts a winged scarab beetle pushing the sun disc ahead of it with two snakes descending from the disc.

5.1.3. The Middle Part of the Mummy Cover

5.1.2.1. The First Register (B)



Figure 4: Register B and C..

Central to this register is the winged scarab. It has the sun disc with two snakes descending from it. The scarab has the *shen* sign symbolising eternity and protection between its feet. Beside the former ensemble, on each side, is the symbol for the West, comprised of a hawk with a feather.

On the outer upper corner of this register, beside the symbol of the West, is a winged cobra. On the other side of the register, in the same place, is another winged cobra that mirrors the position of the first mentioned snake. The snake on the right side is holding the *ankh* sign, one of the most familiar symbols of ancient Egypt. This symbol and a hieroglyph sign means life. On the left side, the *ankh* is missing, most likely due to the lack of space.

There is an image of an alabaster bowl between the symbol of West and beneath the *shen* sign. Beside it, on both sides, are hieroglyph signs for the star and the sky. These are space fillers as is the unidentified hieroglyph sign beneath the winged cobras. There is also the hieroglyph sign *nfr*, meaning beautiful and good, between the symbol of West and the tips of the wings of goddess Nut that reach from the register (C) beneath.

5.1.2.2. The Second Register (C)

In this register the goddess Nut is spreading her wings making them overlap with the above register (B). Beside each side of her head there are two winged cobras and below her wings two protective *wedjat* eyes can be seen. Above the goddess Nut is a thick line with tilted ends representing the hieroglyphic sign for the sky.

5.1.3. The Lower Part of the Mummy Cover

The lower part of the mummy cover is divided into three horizontal registers that are separated both horizontally and vertically by text bands. The vertical text band, in the middle of the mummy cover, is lined with the conventional decorative boarder.

The inscription in the middle vertical band (1) (Appendix 2) reads:

dd=f n wsir nb nhh hnty imntt nfrt

A speech by Osiris, Lord of Eternity, Foremost of the West, that is great.

This next section has six unidentified hieroglyph signs.

wnn=nfr hk3 ʕnh hnty k3 ʕnh.w

Wennefer, Ruler of the Living, Foremost of One of the Living Ka's,

di=fprt-hrw iw3.w

so that he might give a voice offering of cattle.

5.1.3.1. The First Register



Figure 5: Register D..

(D right) In this scene the goddess Isis is on the right side of the Abydos emblem. Between these are a winged eye and two forms that can be considered as space fillers. Based on the scene, where the goddess Isis is standing in front of the Abydos emblem, it can be concluded that these two forms are depicting offering ritual items:

a bouquet of onions and a *hes* vase. Above this whole scene are lines depicting a vault.

(D left) This side is a mirror image of the right side.

The inscriptions (Appendix 3) above the first register reads:

(2) On the right:

im3hi hr wsir hk3 imnt nfr

The revered one with Osiris, great ruler of west.

(3) On the left:

This inscription is identical to the right side but the direction of the hieroglyphs is reversed.

5.1.3.2. The Second Register

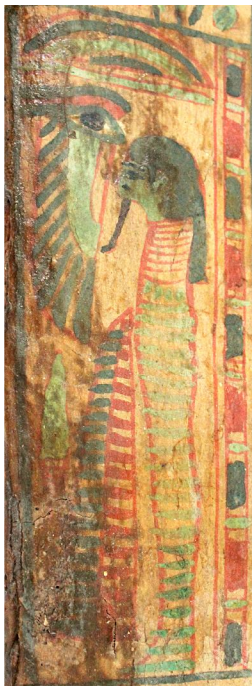


Figure 6: Register E right.

(E right) This register has the god Imsety, the human-headed son of Horus facing a winged eye. Below the eye, as a space filler, is the *sekhem* sceptre, a symbol of power. This image is not entirely visible due to fact that most of the outer corner of this part of the right side register has suffered some damage, making the area blurred. However, based on the mirroring nature of the registers in the mummy cover, it can be assumed that this is the same sign as on the left side of this register. Above these images are the lines depicting vault.



Figure 7: Register E left.

(E left) This side of the register is basically a mirror image of the other side with the exception of the god depicted being the baboon-headed son of Horus, Hapy. On this side the image of the *sekhem* sceptre is whole.

The inscriptions above the second register reads:

(4) On the right:

im3hi hr ms̄ti

The revered one with Imseti.

(5) On the left:

im3hi hr hpy

The revered one with Hapy.

5.1.3.3. The Third Register



Figure 8: Register F right.

(F Right) Under the lines depicting the vault one can see the god Duamutef, the jackal-headed son of Horus. In front of him are a group of hieroglyphs (Appendix 4). Two of these hieroglyphic signs can be identified. The other is the sign for the star and the other is the unilateral sign *f* (N 14 and I 9 on Gardiner's Egyptian grammar). Both of these signs appear in Duamutef's name and based on this fact and the existence of the other sons of Horus' and their position on the decorations and for the fact that Hapy's name is clearly stated above second register on the left side, it can be concluded that the readable and the unreadable signs are part of Duamutef's name.



Figure 9: Register F left.

(F Left) The layout is the same as on the right side. Under the vault is the god and in front of him are the hieroglyphic signs. The god in this is the last of the four sons of Horus, the falcon-headed Qebesenuf. This section of the mummy cover is badly damaged and a piece of it is missing. Only four hieroglyphs remain intact. Of these the top most can be identified as the sign for water-pot with water pouring from it (W 15 on Gardiner's Egyptian Grammar). Based on the previous conclusion on Duamutef's name and the evidence supporting it, these hieroglyph signs can be deduced to be part of Qebesenuf's name.

The inscriptions above the third register reads:

(6) On the right:

im3hi hr Nbt-hwt

The revered one with Nephthys.

(7) On the left:

This inscription is identical to the right side but the direction of the hieroglyphs is reversed.

The inscriptions below the third register reads:

(8) On the right:

im3hi hr

The revered one with

(9) On the left:

im3h

The revered one

This inscription seems to be identical to the right side but the direction of the hieroglyphs is reversed and only two hieroglyphs have survived.

6 The Analysis of the Mummy Cover KM 14565: a

6.1 The Physical Examination



Figure 10: Examining the mummy cover at the Finnish Heritage Agency..

The mummy cover was examined in person. The surface was studied closely in detail through visual examination by eyes and magnifying glass, occasionally using a flashlight as a light source. In addition, the cover was documented by photography without the use of a flash. The pictures that were taken focused mainly on certain general areas as well as on some secondary areas with minor details and unclear features which were photographed in detail. The aim was to have all the elements of the decoration and hieroglyphs as clear as possible in order to obtain all the information retrievable from the object.



Figure 11: The wooden beam attached to the backside of the mummy cover.

Due to the fragile state of the mummy cover and the separate unattached piece (the hand), it was decided not to turn the object upside down so as to gain a view of the backside of the mummy cover. This manoeuvre was in some sense unnecessary because of the wooden beam attached to the back of the mummy cover, obviously for purposes of exhibiting the object. The beam raised the object from the inspection surface about four centimetres allowing a look on the backside. From this constricted view it was however possible to make the conclusion that there are no decorations or hieroglyphs on the backside. It was also possible to note that the hands and the head parts were attached by wood pegs. There is one peg for each hand, one of which can

be seen on the front of the object due to the fact that the left side hand is missing. As for the head two pegs were used to attach it to the baseboard.

The look on to the backside revealed that the object is made of one single piece of wood and that its shape is slightly concave. Based on these observations and on the height measurements, which indicated that the height of the object (168 cm) fits within Niwinski's (1988: 63) average length measurement for a mummy cover (160-175 cm), it can be determined that this object is a mummy cover instead of a coffin lid. Although both terms, a coffin lid and a mummy cover, have been associated with this object, the latter term is the more accurate one.

6.2 The Inscriptions

The inscriptions on the mummy cover are in the middle Egyptian language written by using the hieroglyph writing system. In the third intermediate period the spoken language was late Egyptian (in use 1600-600 BC) but the standard used for hieroglyphic writing was middle Egyptian (in use as spoken language 2100-1600 BC) (Allen 2000: 1).

The translation is done by transliterating the hieroglyphic signs and through referencing. I have translated as extensively as I was able with my limited knowledge and time frame. The translations published in this thesis are those of which I am most certain. Pictures of the untranslated can be found on appendix (Appendix 5).

The hieroglyphs have been drawn in thick lines that make intricacies in the individual signs disappear. For example, the uniliteral sign *n* is presented as a thick line instead of the wavy line as it usually is depicted. In addition the surface of the mummy cover is in places smudged making the interpretation of individual signs difficult.

What I have been able to conclude is that the text is constituted of epithets of gods and an offering formula. The offering formula is a "fixed combination of words" which was used in funerary rituals. (Collier & Manley 1998: 35-36.)

Ancient Egyptians believed in order for them to survive the death, one of the things that they needed was for their name to be conserved. The name was seen “as an essential aspect of his individuality, a medium through which his existence was manifested”. (Taylor 2001: 23.) So the possibility of finding the name for the person who this mummy cover belonged to is intriguing. However, I was not able to translate the whole vertical inscription due to time constraints and the poor state of the text left. Based on what I know about the hieroglyphs left I am leaning towards the conclusion that there will not be a name in the lower part of the vertical inscription.

6.3 Decorations

Egyptian art has several distinctive characteristics. It was religious, it had ritual function and it was conceptual. In ancient Egyptian art a “set of accepted symbols was used to encode information for the viewer to read, so that drawings of figures and objects can be regarded as diagrams of what they represent.” This meant it had to be straightforward in transmitting meanings behind the depicted pictures. This made it formal and static. (Robbins: 7, 11.)

The decorations were analysed with iconography. In chapter five, where the decorations were described, the first two levels of iconography were used. In the first level, the pre-iconographical description, forms were identified. Then the iconographical analysis was carried out by identifying the forms as motifs. Basically this entailed the identification of a flower as a flower and further still the flower as a lotus. This part of the analysis took place quite instinctively and it can be stated that I was able to identify all the motifs used in the decorations.

The final stage would be to carry out the iconographical interpretation where the symbolical meanings would be decoded. There will be no further analysis of the symbolical meanings of the ancient Egyptian decorations in this object. Analysing all the visual elements on the mummy cover is in itself a study of its own and this type of detailed analysis does not answer the research question. The imagery on the mummy cover is typical to those used on coffins, abounding the associations to rebirth, resurrection and protection.

6.4 Conclusions

The research question for this thesis was to whom did this object belong? Based on my research it can be concluded that person who used this mummy cover was a female. This can be confirmed by inspecting the mummy cover with its depiction of flat hands and earrings. However, the third element verifying the gender, the breasts, is missing. The name of the female deceased will remain a mystery but based on the discovery of the provenance to the Bab el-Gasus coffin find we have access to some more information about her. She lived during the 21st dynasty when Thebes was ruled by theocracy and was most likely part of an Amun priest family. Lastly, as the use of the mummy cover proves, with its decorations, she was buried according to the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians of that era.

7 Discussion

In the introduction I outlined the aims of my thesis. My goal in this thesis was to discover to whom this object belonged. I planned to decipher the hieroglyphs and identify what the subjects of the images as well as to find some meanings for them. In addition to these, I aimed to carry through a physical examination of the mummy cover.

However, I also felt that by merely existing this object was communicating something. Its mere presence in Finland and the question how did an ancient Egyptian mummy cover end up in the collection of the Finnish Heritage Agency, revealed questions and connections to the history of Finland and Russia, to the history of Egyptology and to the remarkable 21st dynasty coffin find of the Bab el-Gasus cache and the associated international research. The mummy cover itself brought forth the question of what it was used for and by whom. The pictures and the texts opened up the beliefs behind its conception and how ancient Egyptians viewed the afterlife. Also, the identification of the gender of the mummy cover as female relates us some information.

The section on research history can be regarded as successful. The field of the coffin studies is complicated and lacks coherent manuals, yet I feel, inspite of this the main features of the methodology of coffin studies and its history, especially concerning the 21st dynasty coffins, has been outlined in this thesis.

There was not much previous research produced on the mummy cover. However, the investigation carried out in this thesis has gather a rather conclusive picture of what has been done before. The most significant find was the provenance of the mummy cover. This was verified with the evidence I had accessed to.

In my view, this study succeeded in outlining the main features of the theory of iconography. The theory was presented it in an understandable and usable manner. Iconography, as this investigation shows, is extremely convenient and functional in interpreting the ancient Egyptian decorations because of their symbolic nature.

Also the description section of this thesis appears successful. All the most relevant information on the mummy cover seems to have been represented in a conscience manner.

The sections where the thesis shows some weakness are the contextual background and analysis. The contextual background was a necessary addition in order to tie the mummy cover to its place in time and space in addition to understanding the beliefs that drove the ancient Egyptians to manufacture coffins and to decorate and write on them in a certain way. The chapter is however just a glimpses into these matters and more knowledge could illuminated the subject matter more.

The problem with the analysis as I see it, was trying to achieve too many goals at the same time, which led to the thesis accomplishing a basics initial research but not investigating the subject in an adequate depth.

The obvious problems in this thesis were firstly the fact that the chosen theory of iconography did not quite match the research question. In a sense the theory was slightly redundant. It did not aid in the overall study of the object as it mainly focused on the pictorial elements of the mummy cover and the information generated. In other words, it was not relevant in answering the research question.

This led to the multifaceted study of the mummy cover, which in itself produced a lot of new information. Consequently, the question became how to approach all this new information and tie it to the research question. In order to proceed the study was faced with the need to somehow tie the new information and the mummy cover to contexts of history, society, culture, art and religion of ancient Egypt. Regardless of all the aforementioned factors, I do stand behind my research question as it helped me point out the relevant conclusions.

This study brought forth new information on the provenance of the mummy cover, defined the object as mummy cover and opened up the questions concerning the content of the hieroglyph signs and the images.

The discovery of the likely provenance of the artefact I find highly significant. It gives the mummy cover an archaeological context and it is in par with the recent international research on the Bab el-Gasus cache finds coffins. Future study is made possible with this conclusion. There is, for example, a possibility to use this mummy cover when engaged in the study of the 21st dynasty theocracy of Thebes.

As mummy cover and the previous definition of coffin lid are two separate things it is important to define this object as mummy cover. The mummy cover is something quintessential to the 21st dynasty as it was not in use in other time periods. A question of the rest of the coffin ensemble is raised. The mummy cover was placed inside at least one coffin. So where is rest of this ensemble? Was there one or two coffins used in the burial? What about the mummy itself? These might be questions that we will never get an answer.

Translating the hieroglyph texts was relevant to the research question since the ancient Egyptian coffins usually held the name and title of the deceased. This was time consuming but I was able to interpret them enough to quite confidently say that on this mummy cover there is not a name.

Identifying the elements in the images gave some good results as I was able to identify them with some exceptions. This gives a good basis for future research and for the iconographical interpretation. In where symbolism can be discussed in the context of the ancient Egyptian afterlife beliefs and the mummy cover itself and its role in the funerary rituals. This, however, is a research of its own. In that sense this

was a bit of a side step in the analysis of the mummy cover. Though, it did give some picture of the beliefs the female, to whom this mummy cover belong, might have believed and tied her to the context of the time, society and religion of this point of ancient Egyptian history.

8 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to answer the research question of to whom did this object belong by physically examining the mummy cover, translating the hieroglyphs and using the theory of iconography to identify the images on the decorations.

The study started with the familiarization of the source literature and getting to know the topical international research into the ancient Egyptian coffins. The study continued with research into the archives of the Finnish Heritage Agency and with the physical examination of the mummy cover at the Finnish Heritage Agency and continued with analysis of the results of the physical study and the images together with translating the hieroglyph texts.

As a result I was able to identify the object as a mummy cover and the person to whom it belonged to as a female who lived during the 21st dynasty and was part of the elite of the priests of Amun at Thebes.

On what was previously know of the mummy cover I was able to clear the definition of the object as mummy cover instead of a coffin lid. In addition I was able to correct some of the previous interpretations of the images in the decorations of the mummy cover. More importantly I discover the archaeological context of this object and linked it to the major 19th century coffin find of Bab el-Gasus. This lines the study done in this thesis together with the present trends in the ancient Egyptian coffins where the Bab el-Gasus cache has been of great interest in the resent years. This connection to the find and to 21st dynasty Thebes opened new avenues in understanding to who the person to whom this mummy cover belong to was.

This thesis gives foundation on what to base future research. There are several possibilities. Analysing the images more in depth and tying them to a broader context. Translating all the hieroglyphs and defining their context into other coffin

texts. To take a look at the persons connection to the Amun priests and the Theban theocracy or to the role of female in ancient Egypt. And finally confirming the provenance of the mummy cover to the Bab el-Gasus coffin find.

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Appendix 1

The chronology starts from the beginning of Pharaonic Period (i.e. c.3000-664 BC) and excludes prehistory. It ends in 395 which marks the beginnings of the Byzantine Period, a period usually named as the Coptic or Christian Period in Egypt. The dates are based for the most part on ancient king-lists, dated inscriptions and astronomical records. (Shaw, 2003, 480-489.)

CHRONOLOGY OF EGYPT

Early Dynastic Period c.3000–2686 BC

1st Dynasty c.3000–2890

2nd Dynasty c.2890–2686

Old Kingdom 2686–2160 BC

3rd Dynasty 2686–2613

4th Dynasty 2613–2494

5th Dynasty 2494–2345

6th Dynasty 2345–2181

7th and 8th Dynasties 2181–2160

First Intermediate Period 2160–2055 BC

9th and 10th Dynasties 2160–2025

11th Dynasty (Thebes only) 2125–2055

Middle Kingdom 2055–1650 BC

11th Dynasty (all Egypt) 2055–1985

12th Dynasty 1985–1773

13th Dynasty 1773–after 1650

14th Dynasty 1773–1650

Second Intermediate Period 1650–1550 BC

15th Dynasty 1650–1550

16th Dynasty 1650–1580

17th Dynasty c.1580–1550

New Kingdom 1550–1069 BC

18th Dynasty 1550–1295

Ramessid Period 1295–1069 BC

19th Dynasty 1295–1186

20th Dynasty 1186–1069

Third Intermediate Period 1069–664 BC

21st Dynasty 1069–945

22nd Dynasty 945–715

23rd Dynasty 818–715

24th Dynasty 727–715

25th Dynasty 747–656

Late Period 664–332 BC

26th Dynasty 664–525

27th Dynasty (1st Persian Period) 525–404

28th Dynasty 404–399

29th Dynasty 399–380

30th Dynasty 380–343

2nd Persian Period 343–332

Ptolemaic Period 332–30 BC

Macedonian Dynasty 332–305

Ptolemaic Dynasty 305–30

Roman Period 30 BC–AD 395

Appendix 2

The vertical column of the translated hieroglyphs.



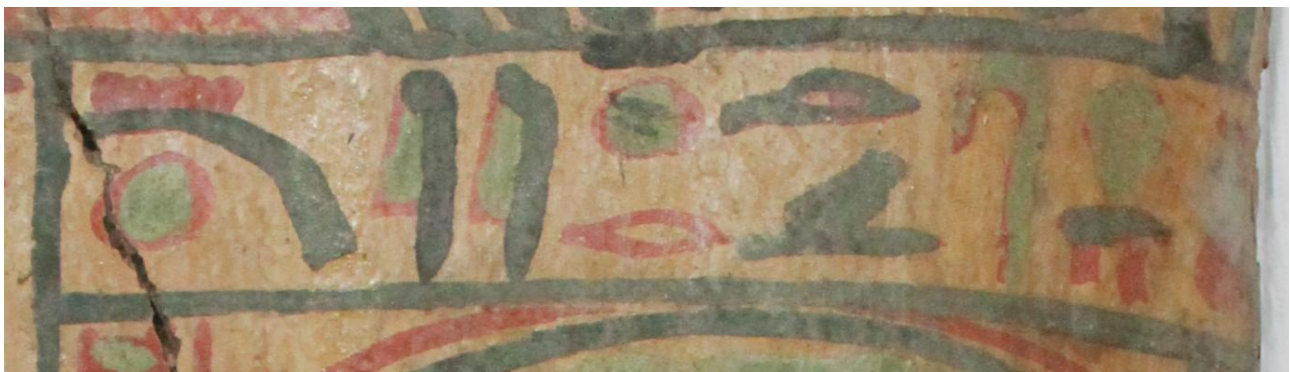
Appendix 3

The horizontal hieroglyphs.

2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

9.



Appendix 4

The hieroglyphs on the F register.



Right side.



Left side.

Appendix 5

Vertical column of the hieroglyphs left untranslated.



